



ATTACHMENT A

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A solid support for a biochemical assay, comprising a support which is substantially linear or planar in shape, incorporates a spatially varying pattern for identification purposes, and has an anodised metal surface layer, probe molecules for the biochemical assay being bound to the surface layer, and all external dimensions of the support being less than 100 μ m, whereby if the biochemical assay is performed using a plurality of the supports in a transparent-based, 7 mm diameter, cylindrical well, at least about 100 to 130 of the supports will be readable through the base of the well~~an aqueous suspension for performing a bioassay is formable from a plurality of the supports present in a given area of aqueous suspension.~~

2. (Original) A support according to claim 1, wherein the surface layer has a cellular structure anodisation layer, the growth direction of the cells of the anodisation layer being perpendicular to the plane of the surface layer.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) A support according to claim 1, wherein the surface layer is of anodised aluminum.

5. (Original) A support according to claim 1, wherein the surface layer is porous.
6. (Previously Presented) A support according to claim 5, wherein the pore size of the surface layer is approximately matched to the size of the bound probe molecules.
7. (Canceled)
8. (Previously Presented) A support according to claim 1, wherein said pattern is a barcode.
9. (Original) A support according to claim 8, wherein the barcode is a linear barcode.
10. (Original) A support according to claim 1, in which the pattern comprises a series of holes in the support.
11. (Withdrawn) A method of fabricating the supports of claim 1, comprising sputter coating a flat surface with metal layer, anodising the metal layer, and lithographically patterning and etching the metal layer to reveal the supports.

12. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 11, wherein said surface consists of layer of soluble material on a rigid substrate, and the method further comprises releasing the supports from said surface by solvation of the soluble material.
13. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 12, wherein the soluble material is a resist.
14. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 11, wherein the anodising is carried out at a voltage of up to 150 V.
15. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 14, wherein the anodising is carried out at a voltage in the range from 4 V to 30 V.
16. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 11, further comprising binding probe molecules to the anodised metal layer.
17. (Withdrawn) A optical reader for reading the patterns and identifying the supports according to claim 7.
18. (Withdrawn) A reader according to claim 17, operating by means of transmission optics.

19. (Withdrawn) A reader according to claim 18, wherein said supports are transported through an optical read volume by a fluidic system.
20. (Withdrawn) A reader to claim 18, in which there are two substantially orthogonal light transmission paths.
21. (Withdrawn) A reader according to claim 20, incorporating one or more fluorescence detectors.
22. (New) A support according to claim 1, wherein the spatially varying pattern is adapted such that the identity of the spatially varying pattern is recognizable even when a fluorescent label is used in the biochemical assay to bind to the support.